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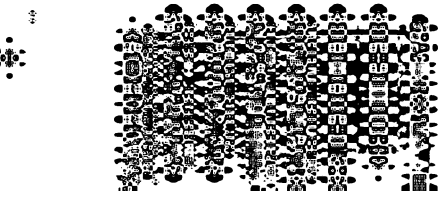
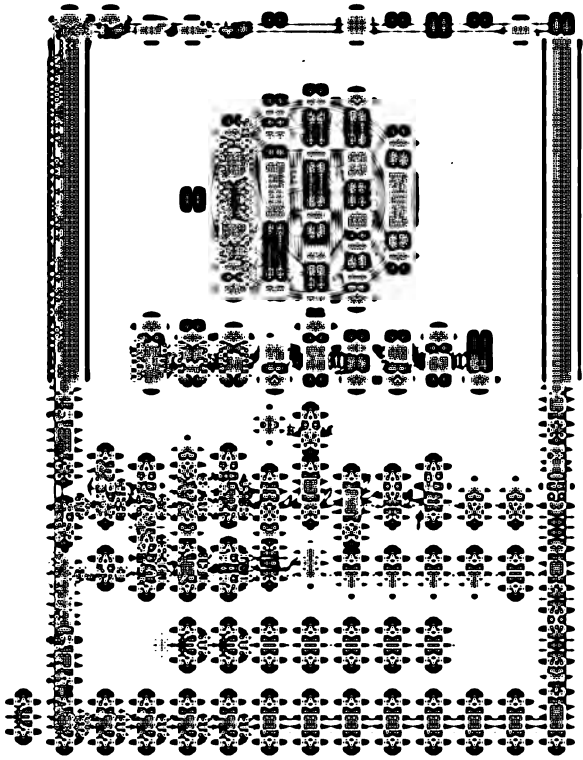
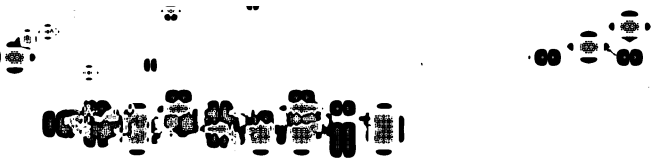
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George R. Young

[PROSPECTUS.]

Lectures
ON THE
HISTORY & PROGRESS
OF
MODERN EDUCATION,
AND THE EFFECTS OF
LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND LEGISLATION
UPON
RELIGION, MORALS, & NATIONAL CHARACTER.
WRITTEN WITH A VIEW OF IMPROVING
The Educational, Literary, and Public Institutions
OF
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

BY
GEORGE R. YOUNG, Esquire,
OF HALIFAX, NOVA-SCOTIA:
BARRISTER AT LAW, &C.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following lectures have been written to carry out and complete a literary design, which was formed some years ago. During the two sessions in which I was President of the Institute in Halifax, it occurred to me that a series of Lectures might be prepared upon distinct and attractive branches of letters, philosophy and legislation, so as to give a condensed and graphic view of their respective histories and progress,—to sketch, in short, a general outline, which the student could afterwards fill up, according to natural taste and predilections, and to aid in this useful labour, by giving references to the best authors, where the subjects and questions were fully and elaborately treated. With this idea the outlines of some of these lectures were read and published at the request of the Institute. This plan was then supposed to be novel, and met the approval of literary men, in whose taste and judgment I placed greater reliance than in my own. If assimilated to essays, I frankly admit here, they cannot claim even the limited merit of novelty. Of the latter there are in the history of knowledge many examples. “*MAGNA COMPONERE PARVIS.*” the essays in the *Spectator* upon the Imagination and Eviden-

ces of the Christian Religion—Hume's and Knox's volumes, the series of popular dissertations on science contained in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal and the Penny Magazine—Blackstone's, Kent's and Story's Commentaries on Law, are all works where comprehensive and popular views are presented of the different branches of learning or philosophy on which they treat. This design therefore is only original in giving to the Lectures A STRICTLY EDUCATIONAL CHARACTER. They are addressed to both sexes. They embrace the Infant School, the College, the Institute, the Museum, and the Library; suggest the principles of a thorough system of practical education for these Colonies:—and then endeavour to guide the mind in the general subjects these volumes embrace, free of all party or sectarian views, in the great work of self-improvement, which is the only sure foundation of extensive acquirements, purity of taste, and solidity of judgment. Schools and Colleges confer the habits of learning only: to acquire practical and useful information is the business of after life. The woman and the man can obtain only in childhood the means of knowledge and of self culture: to extend and use these acquisitions is a duty which runs from childhood to the grave.

When in England in 1837 some of the Lectures were submitted to my late friend, Dr. Birbeck, the President of the London Institute; and who deservedly enjoys the high reputation of being the founder of these Institutions in Great Britain; and he and others, engaged in the vast and Christian cause of popular instruction, expressed their approval of the scheme, and offered to lend them the influence of their names. I have a letter from this venerable Man, in relation to them,

referring to the name of Lord Brougham, which I preserve as a literary treasure. Before they were ready for the press, professional and other engagements then interfered, and induced me to abandon the task, until some future and more fitting time. During the last three years they have lain on my table, and been a source of mental relaxation and refreshment, when an hour of leisure could be spared from graver, and perhaps more profitable, pursuits.

A domestic affliction which bereft home of its fairest ornament, induced me at the close of the past year to seek consolation in solitary, but I trust not dishonourable, studies. Former labours were revised—the plan reformed and extended; and as an offering to the memory of one most deeply and deservedly lamented, the endeavour has been made to engraft a deeper spirit of religion into the principles and system of Colonial Education, in the hope that the fresh gems may yet fructify and cover the land with a vigorous and beautiful foliage. They are yet far from the standard of utility which I hoped to have obtained; but if, with all their imperfections they have the effect of calling abler minds into the same field of exertion, the history of Colonial Literature, Law, and Legislation, may yet be adorned with a series of volumes written on a similar plan, so as to place in the hands of every young person of either sex, who is animated with the noble desire of self improvement, cheerful lamps to guide in the search for knowledge, virtue and happiness.

I publish the work with no expectation of pecuniary profit. Books published in the Colonies have never been a very promising speculation—if it even entail a loss I shall not be without a recompense. It has already afforded me many

peaceful and consolatory hours. To live in a world, and to indulge in visions of one's own, surrounds the mind for the time with a beaming and tranquil atmosphere, which sweetens the progress of life, and lets the stream glide more beautifully and calmly on. The dreams and hopes of the mind stretching to an ideal and abstract perfection may be delusive; but if the imagination will indulge in cheering and hopeful aspirations, (and who so severe as to hold it always in absolute subjection?) they are the same as reality itself.—These labours however have yet to receive a higher reward. If the desire for founding improved Educational and Scientific Institutions be extended to every Settlement and Township in British North America, and the modern views I advocate, become the policy of our Legislatures, the desired harvest will be gathered in. To see Schools, Colleges, Institutions, and Museums, grow up around us—modern principles embraced and acted upon—the Old World instructing and benefiting the New—children harvesting the wisdom, and adopting the experience, of their Fathers—and Colonies, in their infancy, cultivating and cherishing a taste for philosophy, science, and the belles-lettres; and embracing modern principles of Legislation, which it has been the work of centuries to create and systematise in Europe, is a prospect which must delight and animate every rightly constituted mind.

An opinion besides has obtained, and is daily gaining strength, that the present era of affairs requires extra exertion—that to strive to advance the general intelligence, and to confer upon these Colonies a literary standing and name, is to perform an honourable duty. A new destiny is promised to them, for Britain clearly intends to raise another England on

this Continent, and give to the energy of the Anglo-Saxon race, the glorious inheritance of her Constitution. Here the steam-boat, after her passage across the broad waste of waters, first touches. Here the spirit, the intelligence and the improvements of the old world ought first to be made visible, and then be sent back in bright and reflected rays to our Motherland. It is repeating a truth often before told, but not on this account the less impressive, that General Education, based on Christian principles, is favourable to National morals and virtue,—that a knowledge of science leads to the extension and perfection of art,—that a taste for learning and literature induces intellectual research and refinement,—and that these, when combined, beget a happier tone of social and political feeling. A generous enthusiasm for education and literature has ever softened the temper of the age; created and sustained a vigorous spirit for public improvement; and founded institutions which are the glory of our race.

To endeavour to promote these benign and happy results cannot be labour in vain. As every rain drop that falls in Nubia adds to the volume and fertility of the Nile—every fresh stone encreased the height and grandeur of the Pyramids—each individual soldier exalts the strength of an army—and Science itself, however abstract and recondite, is but the multiplication of single ideas: so every fresh contribution to colonial literature may add to the provincial fame. I submit these volumes in patient hope to the criticism of my fellow colonists, whose decision on former efforts has cheered meditative and solitary hours; but be the decision as it may, I trust the example set will soon be followed by others, and that it will not be long before these Colonies reach that po-

sition in the history of Education, Literature, and enlightened principles of Legislation, which it is their high and undoubted destiny yet to occupy. There is a spring and vivacity in the Provincial mind which cannot be repressed:—it is flashing around us with promethean fire—it is visible in the rapid rise and extent of private and public enterprises—in the increase, spirit, and talent of the Colonial Press,—and the blessings of Providence cannot but descend upon those, who, with an humble, earnest and candid spirit, labour to give it a right direction, and to base the pursuit of intellectual improvement and Colonial polity on the principles of a Catholic faith.—“Happy is the man, says the sage of old, that getteth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of silver and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things that are desired are not to be compared to her. Length of days are in her right hand and in her left hand are riches and honour, HER WAYS ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS, AND ALL HER PATHS ARE PEACE”—this is the language of inspiration and therefore the language of truth.

GEORGE R. YOUNG.

HALIFAX, MAY 1, 1842.

CONTENTS

OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

[Dedicated to the Right Honorable LUCIUS BENTINCK, VISCOUNT FALKLAND, Knight Grand Cross of the Guelphic Order, and Member of Her Majesty's most Honorable Privy Council,—Lieutenant-Governor, and Commander-in-Chief, in, and over Her Majesty's Province of Nova-Scotia, and its Dependencies.]

Lecture 1.

INTRODUCTION TO GENERAL LITERATURE AND SCIENCE—THE EFFECTS AND BENEFIT OF THEIR CULTIVATION ON INDIVIDUALS, AND NATIONS—COMPARISON BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN KNOWLEDGE.

CONTENTS.

Literature of the Golden Ages—the eras of Literature defined—In the two first learning confined to a chosen few; not extended to the people;—the vigour and originality of the works then produced—Literature of the ancient and middle ages—no press—books nor mode of publication—Authors and Works—the Revd. Mr. Wishart's Rough sketch of English Literature—English Language—influence of Chaucer—Age of Queen Anne and Louis the Great, state of education among the common people—Lord Bacon's belief in Divination—trials for Witchcraft—state of Morals and Education—Mr. Colquhoun's Lecture—Revival—Publication of the Spectator—style of English Authors—the rise of the present Age of letters—Historians and Philosophers—publication of Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews—their influence upon Style and Literature—Increase of Reviews and Periodicals—a review of the improvements and discoveries of the age—names and productions of the great men who have adorned it—Astronomy—Geology, Steam Engine, &c.—remarkable features of the Age in the diffusion of learning—state of Education—New

principles in the schools—Education of circumstances—Penny Magazines—Fellenberg—Brougham—Birbeck—History of W. and Robt. Chambers and of Chambers' Journal—Family Cyclopedias, &c.—Popular Publications.—On the extent and propagation of Christianity—a Religion of Reason—Keith on the Prophecies—Evidences of Improvement in this Age—Catholic Emancipation—Temperance—Plans to civilize Africa by Buxton—Science now the hand-maid of Religion—Buckland's defence of the Bible—The Bible not intended to teach science—Institutes, and their effects upon social and public principles—Dr. Chalmers' and Lord Brougham on Political Economy—Progress of mind cannot be resisted—Wisdom of directing it—New Views on Education—It is a business of the State.

Lecture 2nd:

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—FEATURES OF THE PRESENT AGE
—CHARMS AND INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE.

CONTENTS.

Charms of Literature and Science in sickness and old age—Choice of Companions—To improve the mind, the duty of every man—how even the busy may have time to cultivate their powers—Examples—Sir Samuel Romily and Charles Butler's habits of study—Necessary to improve, because our faculties and knowledge may pass beyond the grave—Opinion of eminent Authors and Divines on this subject—Melville's Sermons—Mr. Dick's view of the future state—Learning and Wealth contrasted—the different dispositions of mind required for each—Effect of Literature upon happiness, the powers of conversation, and on the performance of the social duties—Respect paid to a learned old age—Resources of Authors—Works by men in confinement—the best educated nations have been the most laborious and wealthy—Effects of Education on the softer sex—Elevation and happiness to them—Their influence in Society—The field for improvement, especially in these Colonies—Mr. Dick's view of the present state of knowledge—Intelligence and virtue, the true conservative principles—Mr. Colquhoun's Lecture—Evidence of History—These results may be secured here, from the British character of our Political Institutions.

Lecture 3rd.

NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION IN THE OLD AND NEW WORLD—EDUCATION IN THE COLONIES OF B. N. AMERICA.

CONTENTS.

Advantages of Education—Three views of a personal nature

—1st, Duty to cultivate our powers, 2ndly, Effects on Morals, 3rdly, Superior endowments may pass with the soul to immortality—Three views of a national character.—1st, Manual skill, an *element* of national wealth—Rev. Mr. Crawley's letters on Education, entitled "The People's Interest"—2ndly, Necessary to preserve an equality in National Competition—Sam Slick a shrewd Lecturer on education, and 3dly the indirect preventive of crime—Progress of Manufactures—Effect of Education on British and Continental workmen—A general system calls out the finest minds and talents from every class—Education a business of the State. No people well educated where education has not been conducted on a general and national system—Feeling in Scotland in favour of Education—Sacrifices made there by parents to educate children—Parish Schools in Scotland—New England Schools, how supported, funds and taxes—State of Education in Prussia, funds and taxes—Sums expended in Prussia and the United States for Education—Schools in Silisia, by President Adams—Mr. Wyse's description of the Ordinances in Prussia, for the regulation of Common Schools—*The absolute necessity of supporting schools by assessment* considered, by shewing that no national and successful system has been supported without it.

Lecture 4th.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—DEFECTIVE STATE OF EDUCATION
IN THESE COLONIES.

CONTENTS.

Ruinous effects of the Voluntary System—Dr. Chalmers's Lectures—Systems in Hesse Cassel, Germany, Norway, and Denmark—Comparison of the State of Education in England and the Continent—Lord Brougham's Speech to the House of Lords—Want of Education in Nova Scotia and other British North American Colonies—Necessity of introducing a General System fitted for all, founded on the Principles of Assessment, and under the control of the Executive, Responsible to the Legislature—Proposed Board of Education for England—State of Education in Nova Scotia—School returns—15,000 Children Destitute of Education in its simplest form in this Province—In Prince Edward's Island by Mr. McNiel's Report, 5000 children there in a population of 47,000, being at least one half not educated—Statistics of Education in New Brunswick—The Honorable C. Mondelet's Outline of, in Canada—Newfoundland—defects of the System in all these Colonies

Lecture 5th.

**ON PUBLIC SPEAKING IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES—THEIR
DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND USES—LABOUR AND
STUDY ESSENTIAL TO EXCELLENCE IN ORATORY.**

CONTENTS.

Power of Language, uses of, and Effect on the Progress of Mind and Social Improvement—Great minds the glory of their era, and an inheritance to future ages—Shakespeare, Bacon, Scott—Eloquence defined—Daniel Webster's description of it—Reciprocal influence between the speaker and the audience—Different Styles of Eloquence required at different times, and on different occasions—Effect of Social Sympathy—Finest Specimens of Eloquence produced in stirring times—History of Eloquence—specimens of, among North American Indians—Ancient Eloquence—Age of Demosthenes—Character of the Athenians—Lord Brougham's Dissertation—Elaborate Preparations made by Ancient Orators—Cause of their excellence—Age of Cicero—Character of the Romans—The Governments of Greece and Rome favorable in those ages to improve the talents and skill of the Orator—The highest honours and influence of the State attained by him—Public Speaking then the only mode of obtaining intellectual distinction—No Press, Reviews, nor Newspapers—Study of oral communication in the East—Buckingham's Lectures—Hints for Improvement—Inaugural address to the students of Glasgow College—Eloquence of the Bible—Testimony in favour of, by Charles Butler and Cambray on Eloquence.

Lecture 6th.

**SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED ELOQUENCE OF THE DARK AGES,—
AMERICAN AND FRENCH REVOLUTIONS.**

CONTENTS.

No records of eloquence in the dark ages—Peter the Hermit—Wickliffe, Luther, Knox—Style of this age as sketched by Blair—Coke and Raleigh—Age of Louis the Great and Queen Anne—Improvement in English Style—Shakespeare—Dryden—Milton—No fine orators before the age of Walpole—American and French revolutions—Effect on eloquence—Fathers of the French Church—Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Burke—their care in preparation—Speakers in the National convention of France—American orators at the time of the revolution—Adams, Henry &c. Orators of Ireland—National Character of the Irish favourable to eloquence—Specimens of eloquence—Paul before Festus, Pitt—Lord Thurlow—Erskine—Grattan, &c., Brougham, O'Connell—McAulay—Talfourd.

Lecture 7th.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED—MODERN ELOQUENCE—MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT.

C O N T E N T S .

Modern Style of Eloquence—This is an age of action and of business—The office of a Speaker now is mainly to persuade—Opinions of Brougham & Moore in his life of Sheridan, in Dublin Review and of Grant in the Bench and Bar of modern eloquence—decline of—Diet in Hungary—Walsh's travels—eloquence of the Pulpit—Quarterly Review on the British Pulpit—Elements or Attributes of eloquence—Cambray and Bishop Burnet on the Eloquence of the Pulpit—Blair's Lectures—Judge Story's description of the Eloquence of the Bar—Public Speaking of this Age of a very high order—Why different from Ancient Eloquence—The Speaker has to deal with facts and reason more closely—No deficiency of talent—if eloquence has declined it is the effect of circumstances—Eloquence does not bring the same reward—No question now decided by the oratorical display of a single master mind—Effect of the press and of education on Public Speakers—O'Connell's opinion on the taste of the English for Metaphor and brilliant passages—No one can prepare too sedulously, even to speak to a popular Assembly—Hints to the students for improving his power of public Speaking—1st intimate Knowledge of his subject—2d, order of arrangement—Ware on extempore Speaking—The art of Improvisatore—3rd, Effect of extensive acquirements—Judge Story's inaugural discourse—4th, Elegant diction, by cultivating the habit of easy and rapid composition—Study of the Ancient Masters Milton &c.—5th personal virtues—6th the effect of living under free institutions—7th, Debating Societies.

Lecture 8th.

ON THE ELEMENTS OF A PERFECT SYSTEM OF COLONIAL EDUCATION; INFANT SCHOOLS; TRAINING OF MORALS AND HABITS, PICTURES.

C O N T E N T S .

Elements of a perfect system of colonial education—Infant and common Schools—Academies, Institutes, Libraries, Colleges &c—Modern principles—the Ancients no guides except in physical training—no letters taught them—Stow's and Combe's system—Children are not to know only what is right, but to be taught to practice it—The modern System of training—the practice of the virtues—the formation of habits—1st Infant schools founded for the poor—but fitted for the rich—History of these Schools—Mr. Robert Owen—Wilderspin—Lord Brougham and Marquis of Landsdowne—Wonderful spread and progress of the System

—Visit by the Author to Lanark Scotland in 1834—Mr. Owen's School there—Knowledge acquired by a child before five years of age equal to all the knowledge he acquires in after life—Teaching children by pictures admirable facilities to imparting knowledge, especially of Natural History—conduct of Parents in the training of Children—Essential to command their own passions—Effect of Nursery tales of terror, ghosts and singular confessions of Sir Samuel Romilly on this subject—Anecdotes—Danger of educating children too soon—precocity of talent often leads to decrepitude and insanity—choice of pictures—Where infant Schools ought to be introduced into these Colonies—Infant School Books.

Lecture 9th.

NECESSITY OF COMBINING RELIGIOUS WITH SECULAR EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND COMPROMISE OF SECTS IN DIFFERENT NATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS—PRACTICAL PLAN FOR THESE COLONIES.

CONTENTS.

Common School Education to be perfect must be founded on religious instruction—Testimony of eminent authors and divines in favour of this principle—James' letters—claim of the Established Church to the controul of schools—no general system introduced into England—Minutes of Council—Government plan for National Education submitted to Parliament in 1839—Compromise in Religious instruction—Opposition of the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords—Appeal to the Queen—Plan proposed by the Committee of Counsel—Lord John Russel's Speech in the House of Commons, July, 1839, in defence of Christianity—Plan for these Colonies—Compromise between Sects proposed, because essential to a Provincial System—James' View on this subject—Adopted in England by the British and Foreign and Colonial School Society—Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Burns on the Parochial Schools of Scotland—Systems in Holland and Prussia,—Union of Catholics and Protestants—Adopted by the National board of Education in Ireland—Collegiate institution formed in Calcutta—Report of Committee—Bishop Wilson, a member of it—Beautiful example of Christian Harmony—Professor Pillan's reform of the Parish Schools in Scotland—Hon. Charles Mondelet's excellent Letters on elementary and practical education in Canada, Montreal 1842—His important services to Colonial Education—Reconciliation of classes there recommended—Religious instruction in P. E. Island—Mr. McNeil's Reports—Rev. Mr. Knox's lecture on "Real Education," delivered before the Institute at Charlotte Town—Dr. Chalmers' exhortation for the unity of sects—The prosperity of a nation depends upon the intelli-

gence and morality of the people—Effect of these as proved by past history and in Britain.

Lecture 10th.

ON THE HISTORY OF THE NOVEL AND THE USES AND ABUSE OF NOVEL READING.

CONTENTS.

Philosophy of the inquiry—No Novels in Greece or Rome—Influence of the sex then unknown—No domestic Life in nor affections—Existence of slavery in Greece—Effect of the Crusades upon English literature and taste by the introduction of the Eastern Fictions—Norman Poets and Troubadors of Provence—History of the “Old Romance”—Age of Queen Elizabeth, Novels then—Superstition of the church—Egyptian Rites—Witchcraft &c.—Morals of the age—Decline of chivalry—Utopia of Moore and Arcadia of Sydney—Days of Addison and the Augustan age of Queen Anne—Effect of Shakespeare upon letters—Novels of Richardson Le Sage—Fielding—Smollett—Rise of the Historical Novels—Misses Porter—Reputation of Female authoresses—The honours they have secured to the sex—The productions of Edgeworth—Scott—Irving—Wilson—Galt—Lockhart—James—Fanny Kemble’s Character of Scott—The Rev. Mr. Wishart’s beautiful eulogium on the “great unknown.”

Lecture 11th.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

CONTENTS.

Bulwer’s Novels—Difference between Scot and Bulwer—Their morality and effects contrasted—Extracts from Bulwer—Remarks on immortality condemned—Review of the Last days of Pompeii—Ernest Maltravers—Scott’s novel of the Heart of Midlothian—Jeannie Deans—Warrens “Ten Thousand a year”—The Swiss Pastor and child—American Novelists—Cooper, Paulding, &c.—Works of Boz—The inimitable Charles Dickens—Character of Novels and sketch of fiction—The true objects ladies ought to have in view in reading novels—Indiscriminate reading condemned—Extracts from an *unpublished* play—Works to be selected—Influence of the sex upon Manners and Morals—Improvement in their education—Effect of the French Revolution on female habits—Utility of Novels to Literary men Mechanics’ and others in improving style, extending a knowledge of human passions: if properly selected, favourable to public and private virtue, and a moderate use of them recommended—Hints to parents and readers as to the selections to be made.

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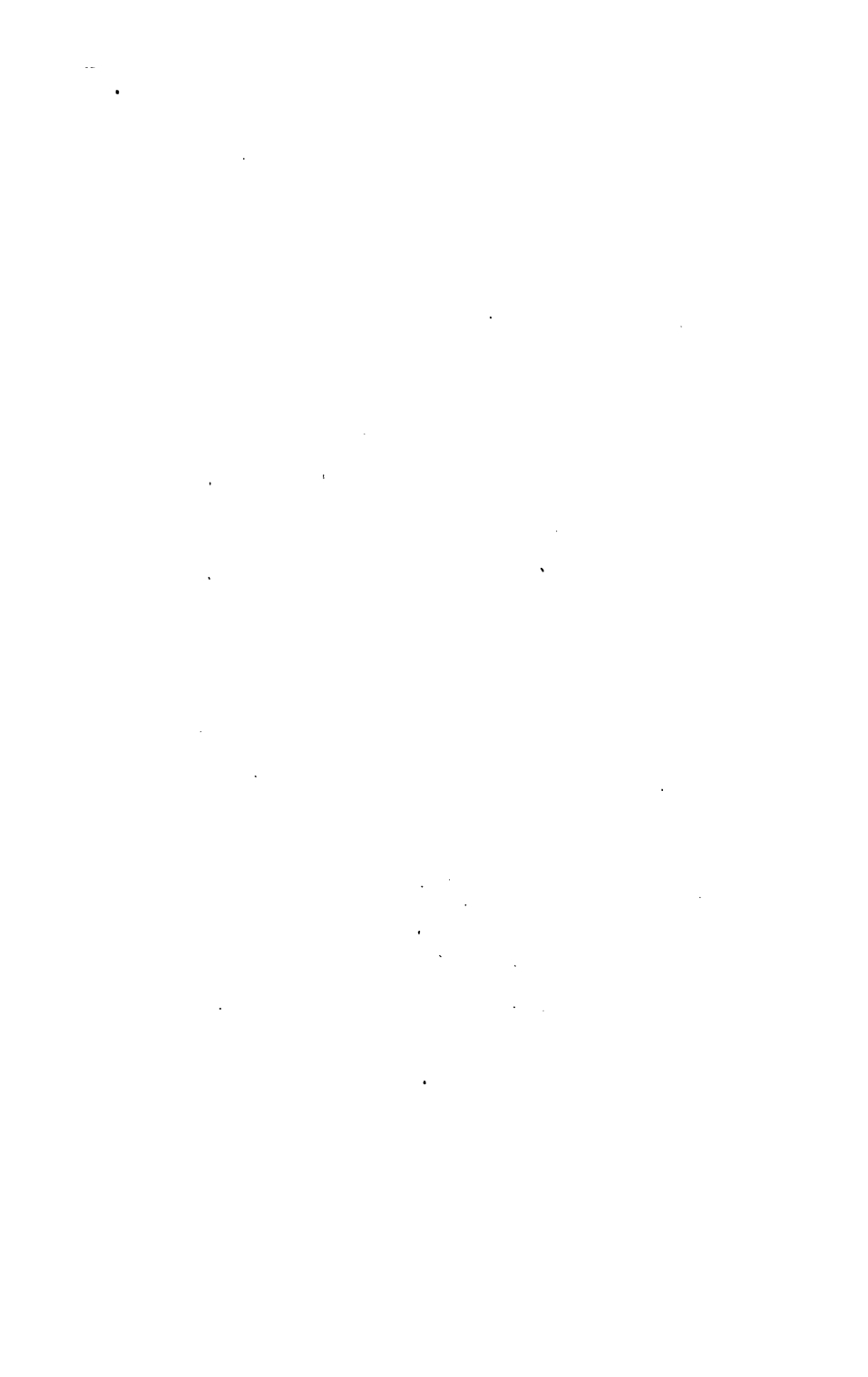
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